Issued by:
Population Division
Department for Economic and Social
Information and Policy Analysis

United Nations Secretariat
New York

POPULATION *Newsletter*

Number 56 December 1993

WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND FERTILITY BEHAVIOUR

Women's education has long been recognized as a crucial factor influencing fertility behaviour. An earlier Population Division study, *Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey* (Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), compiled extensive empirical evidence on the role of female education on fertility decline.

The Population Division is conducting a current study that will update existing evidence from demographic and health surveys on the linkages between female education and reproductive behaviour. Twenty-six developing countries are included in the analysis. The study takes advantage of a new round of internationally comparable data, the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), conducted in the late 1980s.

Levels and trends in women's education

The first part of the report provides an overview of women's educational status in the countries under consideration. Despite universal recognition of education as a fundamental right, women's access to schooling remains inadequate, affecting adversely their productive and reproductive roles as well as their overall quality of life. However, recent educational trends provide some basis for optimism: school enrolment has increased steadily in most developing countries over the past decades and the gender gap in primary education has narrowed considerably.

Empirical evidence on the association between women's education and fertility

The table below presents fertility rates for various educational groups.

Some of the findings of the study are as follows:

(a) Advanced female education is universally linked to lower fertility. In every country examined, women with 10 or more years of schooling have much lower fertility than women who have not attended school. Latin American countries display the largest fertility gaps, in the range of 3-5 children;

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TABLE. TOTAL FERTILITY RATES ACCORDING TO WOMEN'S YEARS OF EDUCATION

	Mean years of education	*Total*	*Years of education*					*Difference*
			0	*1-3*	*4-6*	*7-9*	*10+*	*0-10+*
Sub-Saharan Africa								
Botswana	5.5	5.0	5.9	5.6	5.1	4.5	3.1	-2.8
Burundi	0.9	7.0	7.0	7.4	6.7	(6.6)	(4.2)	-2.8
Ghana	4.9	6.4	7.1	6.6	6.4	6.8	4.9	-2.2
Kenya	5.2	6.7	7.2	7.5	7.5	6.2	4.6	-2.6
Liberia	2.6	6.6	6.8	7.1	7.5	5.7	4.2	-2.6
Mali	0.9	6.9	7.0	6.9	6.6	5.7	(4.7)	-2.3
Senegal	1.5	6.6	7.0	6.4	5.5	4.3	3.6	-3.4
Togo	2.3	6.6	7.2	7.1	6.0	3.9	4.8	-2.4
Uganda	3.3	7.3	7.7	7.4	7.0	7.2	5.3	-2.4
Zimbabwe	6.0	5.7	7.3	7.2	6.3	5.0	3.3	-4.0
Northern Africa								
Egypt[a]	3.1	4.7	5.7	5.3	4.2	3.4	3.4	-2.3
Morocco[a]	1.1	4.9	5.5	3.9	2.9	2.4	2.2	-3.3
Tunisia [a]	2.8	4.4	5.1	4.7	3.7	2.8	2.6	-2.5
Asia								
Indonesia[a]	4.3	3.4	3.8	4.0	3.6	2.8	2.6	-1.2
Sri Lanka[a]	6.3	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.7	-0.1
Thailand[a]	4.8	2.4	3.5	2.8	2.5	2.1	1.5	-2.0
Latin America/Caribbean								
Bolivia	5.9	5.1	6.2	6.4	5.3	4.2	2.8	-3.4
Brazil[b]	5.9	3.7	6.7	5.2	3.4	2.8	2.2	-4.5
Colombia	5.8	3.3	5.6	4.5	3.6	2.5	1.8	-3.8
Dominican Republic	6.8	3.8	5.8	5.0	4.4	3.5	2.6	-3.2
Ecuador	7.1	4.3	6.4	6.3	4.7	3.5	2.6	-3.8
El Salvador	4.8	4.4	6.0	5.2	3.9	3.5	2.5	-3.5
Guatemala[b]	3.1	5.6	6.9	5.6	4.2	2.8	2.7	-4.2
Mexico	6.2	4.1	6.4	6.3	4.0	2.7	2.4	-4.0
Peru	6.2	4.5	7.4	6.1	4.6	3.7	2.5	-4.9
Trinidad and Tobago	8.7	3.1	(2.3)	4.3	3.6	3.8	2.9	0.6

Source: *Women's Education and Fertility Behaviour: Recent Evidence from the Demographic and Health Survey* (United Nations publication, forthcoming)

Notes: Total fertility rates based on the five-year period prior to the survey.
Calculations exclude events and exposure in the interview month.
Numbers within parentheses indicate that they were based on fewer than 100 cases.

[a] Ever-married sample. Estimates for all women are calculated, applying the education inflation factor.

[b] Based on women aged 15-44.

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"The impact of individual schooling is generally weak in poor, rural and mostly illiterate societies, and tends to become stronger in more prosperous societies."

(b) Fertility differentials by education are not uniform under all conditions of development. The strength of the association varies significantly across countries, suggesting the conditioning influence of socio-economic development, social structure and cultural context. The impact of individual schooling is generally weak in poor, rural and mostly illiterate societies; it tends to become stronger in more prosperous societies;

(c) In some of the least developed countries, the effect of education on women with incomplete primary education is fertility-enhancing. In the previous United Nations study, a curvilinear relationship between education and fertility was found in 14 out of the 38 World Fertility Survey (WFS) countries examined. By contrast, that pattern was found in only 3 of the 26 DHS countries (Burundi, Kenya and Liberia). This evolution seems to suggest that the positive impact of education on fertility has become increasingly rare.

The slightly higher fertility among women with a few years of education should not be interpreted as evidence that education has a pronatalistic influence. Even at early stages of the fertility transition, education does not increase the demand for children. The prevailing explanation is that, in circumstances where reproduction is not subject to deliberate regulation, education tends to increase fecundity (because of improved maternal health), reduce foetal deaths and diminish the protection against short-spaced pregnancies traditionally provided by prolonged breast-feeding and post-partum abstinence.

The study confirms that mother's education is generally associated with shorter durations of lactation and post-partum abstinence. However, the impact of these behavioural changes induced by education should not be overstated. In most sub-Saharan African countries, for example, even highly educated women breast-feed their children well beyond the first year of life. Hence, biological explanations need to be complemented by more comprehensive sociological explanations. Indeed, it would be unrealistic to expect a few years of schooling to bring about a genuine transformation in child-bearing norms and behaviour in a predominantly rural and illiterate setting.

Also, it is important to emphasize that, even in societies where the impact of a few years of education on fertility is negligible, or even positive, the relationship turns unequivocally negative when a certain level of education is surpassed. This critical level of educational attainment, around the completion of primary school, coincides with the span usually required for acquiring literacy and numeracy proficiency. A "threshold"-type pattern is more likely to be found in the least developed societies, suggesting that a visible change in child-bearing attitudes and behaviour may require, in comparative terms, a larger amount of education in a less developed setting.

Paths of influence of women's education on fertility

The direct and indirect paths through which female education influences fertility are quite varied. Some of the mediating behaviours, such as contraceptive use, are consciously intended to affect reproductive outcomes, while others, such as breast-feeding, are not. Social development brings about not only a preference for smaller families but also a predominance of choice over physiology.

"Even in societies where marriage is a poor indicator of the onset of sexual activity, better educated women are older when they have their first child."

The study documents how female education is associated with later age at marriage, desire for smaller families and increased awareness, acceptability and access to contraception,

enhancing women's choices in the process of family formation. Higher educational attainment is associated with later entry into marriage. Even in societies where marriage is a poor indicator of the onset of sexual activity, better educated women are older when they have their first child. A later transition to motherhood is likely to influence their final family size.

Better educated women consistently want smaller families. Education can hence be linked to changing expectations from children and changing aspirations for children. In many countries, the estimated levels of unwanted fertility are remarkably high, implying that women are far from having achieved satisfactory control over their reproductive lives. In most Latin American countries, for example, the *wanted* fertility rate is estimated to be one or two children lower than the actual fertility rate. Unwanted fertility rates are lowest among educated women, suggesting that education enables reproductive choice and reduces the discrepancy between desired and actual family size.

"... the percentage of married women using contraception is four times larger among women with 10 or more years of education than among women with no formal schooling."

Women's education affects not only the demand for children but also the ability and willingness to implement fertility preferences through contraceptive means. Figure I illustrates the strong association between female education and contraceptive prevalence at the country level. An even stronger relationship is found at the individual level of analysis. Although women's knowledge of available contraceptive options is generally incomplete, awareness of at least one contraceptive method is fairly high, even in regions characterized by low contraceptive prevalence, such as sub-Saharan Africa. However, although differentials in contraceptive awareness across educational strata are moderate, differentials in contraceptive use by education are remarkably large. For instance, in five of the sub-Saharan African countries examined (Burundi, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Uganda), the percentage of married women using contraception is four times larger among women with 10 or more years of education than among women with no formal schooling. Better educated women not only have much higher rates of contraceptive use but are more likely to use effective methods and rely on contraception at earlier stages of family formation.

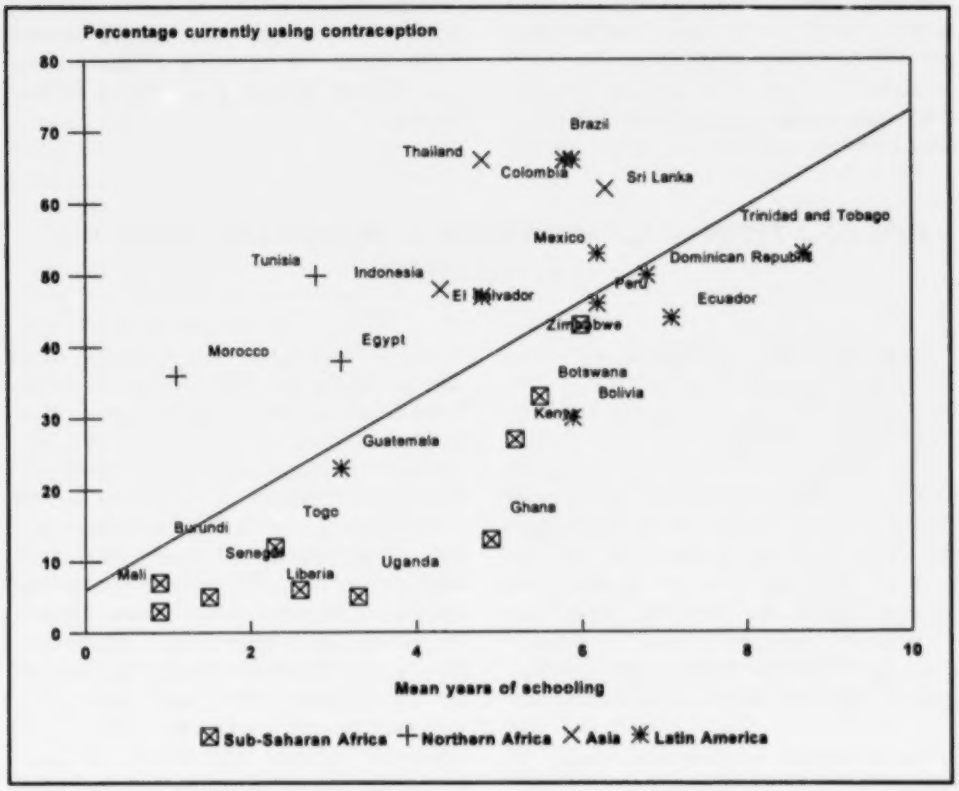
Although awareness of contraceptive methods has improved in recent years, the analysis reveals that a large proportion of women, even educated women, are ill-informed about their reproductive physiology. Prejudices and taboos on sexual matters compound this ignorance, creating barriers to effective contraceptive use. In Demographic and Health Surveys, respondents were asked when within the menstrual cycle they thought a woman had the greatest chance of becoming pregnant. The percentage of women who could answer correctly was particularly low among uneducated women (less than 20 per cent in all countries). Since not only the rate of success of traditional methods of contraception but also the assimilation of modern methods is largely contingent on an adequate understanding of reproductive physiology, the need to enhance women's education and expand the scope of family planning programmes to cover sexual and reproductive health emerges as a crucial issue.

"... all evidence points to women's education as a precondition for steady fertility decline."

Policy implications

Several themes emerging from the study have implications for policy design. For instance, in the least developed countries, small improvements in formal schooling might initially increase fertility or, more often, have a weak demographic impact. However, although investment in educational resources

FIGURE I. CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE RATE BY MEAN YEARS OF FEMALE EDUCATION



may not bring about immediate demographic change, all evidence points to women's education as a pivotal factor in the erosion of the social and institutional foundations of high fertility and hence, as a precondition for steady fertility decline.

The precise impact of education on fertility is largely dependent on the prevailing sociocultural conditions. The study shows, for example, that given the cross-national variation in desired family size among highly educated women, advanced education alone does not guarantee low fertility. However, even in circumstances where it induces only a moderate fertility decline, education invariably reduces the amount of unwanted fertility, contributing universally to the well-being of women and children.

The study provides numerous supporting arguments for advocating universal primary education. It documents that, as the overall educational level of a community rises, the impact of individual schooling upon fertility grows stronger. Hence, policies aimed at promoting mass literacy and expanding primary enrolment will reinforce the fertility-reducing effect of individual education. The study also documents that in many societies women desire fewer children than they actually have. Thus, there exists considerable potential for fertility decline if women could successfully implement their reproductive choices. Whether the gap between ideal and actual fertility can be reduced seems largely contingent on en-

hancing women's education.

In sum, although education should be promoted primarily on grounds of human rights and social justice, women's education, in particular, has come to be regarded as a powerful agent of demographic change. The association between education and women's health status, family well-being and reduced fertility is strong and pervasive enough to warrant policy attention. Despite all obstacles, education continues to inspire big hopes as the most viable means for enhancing women's status and the most promising catalyst of fertility decline.

POPULATION AND DEFORESTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Population factors, --in particular, population size, density, growth spatial distribution-- are increasingly being numbered among the forces affecting the environmental resource base upon which sustainable development ultimately depends. However, a proper assessment of their relative role in environmental degradation faces serious conceptual and empirical constraints. With the view to formulating a research agenda for addressing those constraints, the Population Division is currently preparing a literature survey on the relationships between population and the environment.

One of the main environmental concerns at present is the loss of moist tropical forests, which are disappearing at a rate that threatens the economic and ecological functions they provide. Not surprisingly, tropical deforestation has provoked the largest body of current research in the field of population and environment.

"While increasing numbers of landless or small-scale farmers are often seen as the driving force behind the destruction of the moist tropical forests, research suggests that larger scale farmers and commercial ranching operations may, in fact, account for the majority of the land-clearing."

Central and South America contains the largest concentration of closed tropical forest area in the world, and the bulk of current research on population and deforestation focuses on that region. The majority of recent studies there analyse deforestation in relation to population migration, particularly, on the Amazonian frontier. While increasing numbers of landless or small-scale farmers are often seen as the driving force behind the destruction of the moist tropical forests, research suggests that larger scale farmers and commercial ranching operations may, in fact, account for the majority of the land-clearing. In addition, several case-studies indicate that economic, political and institutional factors determine frontier migration and the deforestation consequences. For example, in Costa Rica, the debt crisis, by aggravating rural poverty and landlessness, has led to increased frontier migration; while in Ecuador, road construction by international oil companies has encouraged migration into the region. In Brazil, official colonization programmes have influenced the direction of migration flows. In Brazil and Ecuador laws linking land-clearing to land claims have increased the incentives for migrants to clear larger areas of land.

"In Indonesia government-sponsored transmigration programmes have triggered flows of spontaneous migrants to the Outer Islands, resulting in large-scale deforestation."

Because population densities are higher in Asia than in other developing regions, much of current research in that region focuses migration and deforestation in relation to population density as well as population growth. Although China contains the largest portion of forest area in Asia, there is currently little information on population and deforestation. The current research on deforestation focuses on India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, and Thailand. In Indonesia government-sponsored transmigration programmes have triggered flows of spontaneous migrants to the Outer Islands, resulting in large-scale deforestation. In the Philippines, interaction between internal migration, global economic trends and long-term population growth has played a major role in the acceleration of deforestation. During the 1980s, the country's debt crisis also played an important role in increasing rural poverty and urban unemployment; as a result, internal migration flows changed from mainly rural-urban to rural-rural. Highland forest areas were a frequent destination for rural-rural flows, and increased migration into those regions increased forest-clearing for land. In Thailand, increased rural density and the concomitant increase in agricultural extensification and the use of fuelwood have advanced deforestation. In Nepal, the predominance of low capital/low productivity agriculture, which necessitates high labour inputs, and the continual expansion of agricultural land, are seen as forces driving both deforestation and population growth. In addition, large-scale logging activities have historically played an important role in deforestation in both Thailand and Nepal, although they have now been banned in Thailand. In India, commercial exploitation of forest areas since colonial times and the concomitant increase in the privatization of communal forest areas in order to facilitate commercial exploitation have been the primary factors advancing deforestation. Population growth has had an impact over the long term by increasing the demands placed on the limited forest areas available for non-commercial use.

"... rural population growth leads to deforestation through increased use of fuelwood and agricultural expansion."

Overall, research on deforestation in Africa is limited in comparison to that in Latin America and Asia. Because Africa is most reliant on fuelwood as an energy resource, research addressing deforestation there focuses on the relationship between population growth and fuelwood. As in other regions of the developing world, the prevailing view on population and forest-use in Africa is that rural population growth leads to deforestation through increased use of fuelwood and agricultural expansion. A number of recent studies which support that view emphasize however, that urban population growth has also played a role, through the commercialization of fuelwood and the flow of supplies to urban areas. However, urban growth and deforestation are not inextricably linked. The demand for fuelwood and, thus, the indirect impact on deforestation of urban dwellers increase to the degree that they rely on charcoal and decrease to the degree that they rely on other sources of energy. Also, the relationship between population density, the use of fuelwood and deforestation varies significantly by agro-climatic and vegetative zone in Africa. Arid and semi-arid regions, islands and mountainous regions with high population densities are most vulnerable. The areas of large tropical forests of central Africa, in-migration, pushed by inequalities in access to land outside forest regions, is leading to accelerating rates of deforestation although, to date, commercial logging activity still plays the most important role in forest-clearing.

Current research suggests that the relationships between population and deforestation in developing countries differ at the regional, national and subnational levels. The relationships described in the three developing regions suggest that demographic factors must be

viewed in the context of other political, economic, institutional and geographical factors. Cause and effect dynamics are not evident; it is the interaction of factors over time that results in deforestation. In many instances, it seems that demographic factors augment processes set in motion by political, economic or institutional factors by increasing the scale on which they occur.

POPIN GOPHER ON THE INTERNET

The Coordinating Unit of the global Population Information Network (POPIN) has been reactivated within the Population Division with funding from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). POPIN is a decentralized network originally established in 1979 by the Economic and Social Council (resolution 1979/33), to coordinate regional, national and non-governmental population information activities. The global Coordinating Unit will enhance communication among the regional POPINs, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and make it easier for them to address common issues.

As one of its immediate activities, the global POPIN Coordinating Unit, along with the regional POPIN Networks and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has established an electronic gopher on the Internet. *POPIN Gopher* will improve the flow of population information both among population experts and to the world at large.

Population information resources in *POPIN Gopher* include electronic journals and newsletters, software, news summaries and press releases, directories and documentation of the International Conference on Population and Development. Resources have been contributed by international, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and cover topics of immediate interest and importance to researchers, policy makers, clinicians, and others in the fields of population, health and family planning.

The *POPIN Gopher* has been designed to serve as a focal point for the display and distribution of population information worldwide, and POPIN welcomes additional relevant postings. Access to the *POPIN Gopher* is free of charge for Internet users. Further information on POPIN and on the *POPIN Gopher* can be obtained by contacting the Director of the Population Division. E-mail messages can be addressed to popin@undp.org .

UPDATE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Population Division continues its preparatory activities for the International Conference on Population and Development, which is scheduled to take place at Cairo, Egypt, from 5 to 13 September 1994.

Preparation of the Conference documentation

The main substantive activities during the second half of 1993 have focused on the preparation by the Secretariat of the principal documents of the Conference -- namely, the first draft of the negotiating document (provisionally called the Cairo programme of action) and the fourth review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action.

Annotated outline of the Cairo programme of action

As reported in the previous issue of the *Newsletter*, the Preparatory Committee for the

Conference, at its second session (May 1993), requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to include, in this report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the progress of Conference preparations, an annotated outline of the draft Cairo programme of action. The outline was expected to build upon the "conceptual framework" of the draft recommendations of the Conference, presented by the Secretariat to the Preparatory Committee at its second session (E/CONF.84/PC/11), taking into account the views expressed by delegations and other participants in the discussions and the Chairman's summary of those discussions. The outline, which could be described as an intermediate step between the conceptual framework and the first draft of the negotiating document, would enable member States to monitor the progress of the substantive preparations and contribute to the process of consensus-building around what would eventually become the programme of action.

Copies of the unofficial English version of the annotated outline were distributed to delegations and other interested parties several weeks in advance of its official release as document A/48/430/Add.1. This gave delegations time to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the contents and to formulate their views in close consultation with their Governments. Subsequent discussions in the General Assembly were thus substantive and focused.

The outline was discussed by the Second Committee of the General Assembly on 4 and 5 November 1993. In order to accommodate all the delegations wishing to intervene in the debate (42 Member States, several of them speaking on behalf of regional groups, the observers from Switzerland and the Holy See and the representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) an extra meeting was scheduled. The speakers were generally in agreement with the structure of the outline, and many praised the way in which the Secretariat had balanced the many views put forward by the Preparatory Committee, a task which one delegation compared to the "squaring of the circle". The Secretariat took note of the nearly 200 pages of suggestions made by delegations.

Review and appraisal of the World Population Plan of Action

As will be recalled, when the Economic and Social Council decided to convene the International Conference on Population and Development, one of the objectives was that the Conference should "contribute to the review and appraisal of the progress made in reaching the objectives, goals and recommendations of the World Population Plan of Action and to identify the obstacles encountered". The Plan, adopted at the World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1974, calls for a "comprehensive and thorough review" to be undertaken every five years by the United Nations system. The current exercise follows those carried out in 1979, 1984 (in the context of the International Conference on Population, at Mexico City) and 1989. It will cover all areas of the Plan of Action, focusing particularly on a set of 28 issues selected by the United Nations inter-agency coordination machinery. Under the arrangements established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to ensure system-wide participation in the exercise, the Population Division is responsible for preparing a report on the review and appraisal, in collaboration with the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, which will be presented to the Preparatory Committee at its third session in April 1994.

Special session on the Conference at the IUSSP General Conference

Recognizing the importance of the Conference to the world community of population specialists, the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) devoted one full day of its twenty-fourth General Conference (held at Montreal from 26 August to 2 September 1993) to extensive discussions of the results of the substantive preparations that had been undertaken. Most of the debate was devoted to an analysis of the results of the United Nations expert group meetings organized by the Population Division in consulta-

tion with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as part of the preparatory process for the Conference. The discussions provided an opportunity for the IUSSP members to interact with the secretariat of the Conference and to make known the expectations and priorities of the demographic community in relation to the outcome of the Conference.

TRAINING IN POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIA PROJECT

Developing countries have come to realize that population is an essential component of a viable development planning programme. However, most African countries have difficulty integrating population into their development plans because of a trained manpower.

"... training courses become permanent features of the academic structure of the participating universities.

The Training of Middle-level Staff in Population and Development Project (NIR/91/001) is designed to address that difficulty in Nigeria. Its objective is to enhance the capability of Nigerian planners to incorporate population factors into development planning. Through the project, 661 civil servants currently engaged in planning activities at all levels of government will be trained; 70 senior officials from the federal and state ministries will receive a 12-month postgraduate course in population and development and 591 civil servants from local government areas (one from each of the 591 areas) will receive an intensive six-week course in population and development. The courses will be offered at three leading universities in Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University at Ile-Ife, the University of Nigeria at Nsukka and Ahmadu Bello University at Zaria. The Population Division provides technical advisory service to the project through a resident Chief Technical Adviser and international consultants.

The most significant feature of the project is that it not only addresses an urgently felt need but also ensures that the training courses become permanent features of the academic structure of the participating universities. This allows continuity of the project after the United Nations assistance has been phased out. The 12-month postgraduate course in population and development will be offered as a regular academic feature of the Department of Demography and Social Statistics of Obafemi Awolowo University, and parts of the six-week course will also be incorporated into the regular curriculum of the Departments of Local Government Studies of all three participating universities. The continuity of the project is also ensured by the provision of specialized training through fellowships, study tours etc. to a few regular staff members from the relevant departments of the three participating universities, those Staff will then assume leadership roles in the further evolution of the training project in their respective institutions. The participating universities will be assisted in building the basic infrastructural facilities most relevant to the programmes in population and development. Documentation/information and computer units, for example, will contain essential and up-to-date published materials and software for use in teaching and research by trainers and trainees.

The project also provides for the preparation of curricula and course materials for the six-week and 12-month courses. Twenty-three national experts were recruited to undertake the task, and the major part of the first phase, (19 March 1992 to 18 March 1993), was devoted to the preparation of course modules. The modules for the 12-month course cover such areas of population and development studies as the demographic situation in developing countries; population policies and

programmes; population and socio-economic development; development planning and policies; migration, urbanization and development; integration of population and development planning; population, food and agriculture; population, energy, environment and development; gender, age and development. The modules for the six-week course cover an introduction to population dynamics; population and development interrelation; demographic perspectives in policies in Nigeria; education, employment and human resources; population information management at the local government level; local government in development. After a thorough review by the Population Division, the materials will be revised and edited for publication. They will be one of the permanent legacies of the project.

The current phase of project implementation, which will last for two years (19 March 1993 to 18 March 1995), will concentrate on training the 661 civil servants and 591 local government staff mentioned above. It will also embark on developing a two-year master's degree programme in population and development, following the same procedures as those of the two other programmes-- i.e., employing national experts and the Population Division technical advisers and international consultants to develop curricula and write course modules. The master's programme is to be mounted in the Department of Demography and Social Statistics of Obafemi Awolowo University.

By the completion of the project in 1995 Nigeria should have a training programme in population and development that can meet its trained manpower needs in that area. The project will also have laid down a firm foundation for the possible creation of an institute of population and development studies capable of catering to the relevant manpower needs of not only Nigeria but also of other West African countries.

ABORTION POLICIES: A GLOBAL REVIEW
vol. II, Gabon to Norway

Between 36 million and 53 million induced abortions are performed annually. Based on various estimates, it is believed that 15 million are clandestine abortions.

Abortion Policies: A Global Review, vol. II, *Gabon to Norway* (Sales No. E.94.XIII.2), prepared by the Population Division, is the second in a three-volume series that examines the major dimensions of induced abortion on a country-by-country basis. The publication's objective is to provide information not only on the legal and policy status of abortion but also on ways in which abortion laws have evolved over time, the manner in which the laws have been interpreted and enforced, and the context within which abortion usually takes place. Various demographic data are provided-- e.g.,total fertility rate, life expectancy and maternal mortality rate. A selected bibliography of the sources utilized in the study is given. Where possible, data on the incidence of induced abortion are also included.

Information on the abortion policies of four countries that gained independence following the publication of volume I (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia) is also included in volume II, as are the abortion policies of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In addition, the sections on the policies of Belarus and China, which were presented in volume I, have been revised and are included in volume II.

"... the overwhelming majority of countries (89 per cent) permit abortion in order to save the woman's life."

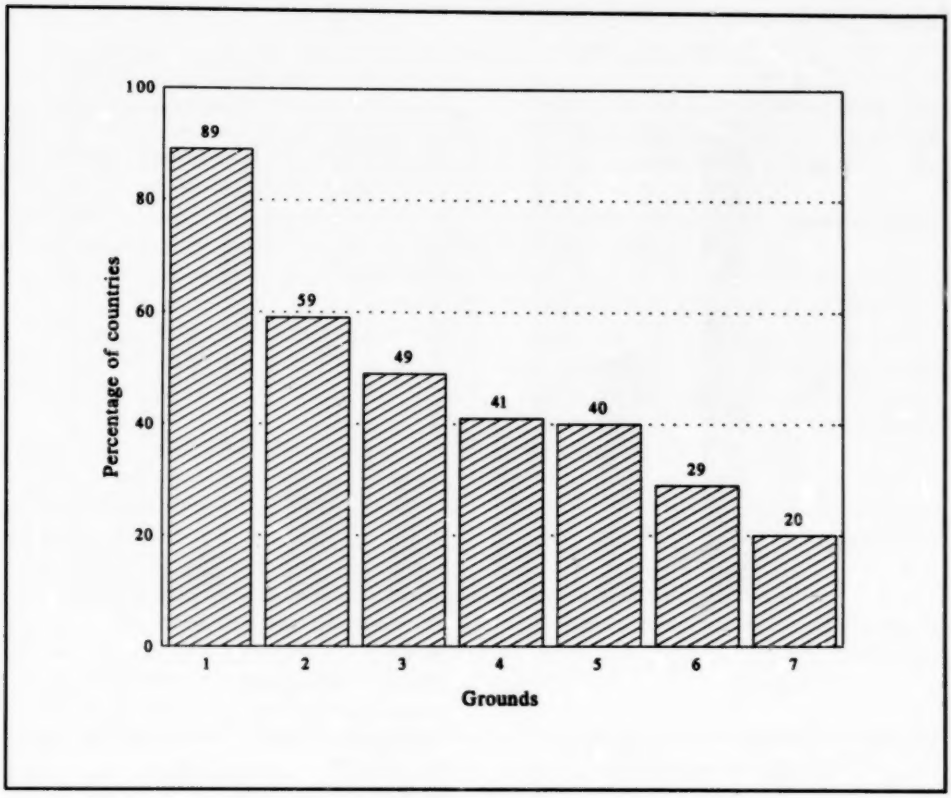
The information contained in volumes I and II for 119 countries, indicates that the overwhelming majority of countries (89 per cent) permit abortion in order to save the woman's life. The countries that do not permit abortion to save the woman's life are Chile and Malta, where abortion is prohibited under any circumstances. In a number of other countries, the laws on abortion prohibit abortion under any circumstances, but other laws, decrees or codes permit abortion under certain circumstances. Examples of such countries are the Central African Republic, the Dominican Republic and Egypt, where general principles of criminal law permit abortion to save the woman's life; Colombia and Mauritius, where legal interpretation generally permits abortion to save the woman's life; Honduras, where the Code of Medical Ethics permits it to save the woman's life; and Nepal where rules of the Medical Council permit it.

Seventy-two of the countries (59 per cent) permit abortion to preserve the woman's physical health, 60 countries (49 per cent) allow abortion to preserve the woman's mental health, and 51 countries (41 per cent) permit it when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. The number declines to 49 countries (40 per cent) when there is the possibility of foetal impairment and to 36 countries (29 per cent) for economic or social reasons. Finally, in 24 countries (20 per cent) abortion is available upon request. The data in the table are summarized graphically in figure II.

"... abortion policies are significantly more restrictive in the developing than in the developed countries."

Disaggregating the 119 countries by level of development reveals significant differences in abortion policies between developed and developing countries (see figure III). For example, of the 36 developed countries, 81 per cent permit abortion on all grounds except "on request". In contrast, among 83 developing countries, the reasons permitting abortion vary considerably. Whereas 86 per cent of the developing countries permit abortion to save the woman's life, only 8 per cent permit it for economic or social reasons. Of the developed countries, 81 per cent permit it for economic or social reasons. Furthermore, while 5 per cent of the developing countries permit abortion "on request", 56 per cent of the developed countries do so. Based on the information from the 119 countries, the data suggest that abortion policies are significantly more restrictive in the developing than in the developed countries.

FIGURE II. GROUNDS ON WHICH ABORTION IS PERMITTED (AFGHANISTAN TO NORWAY)

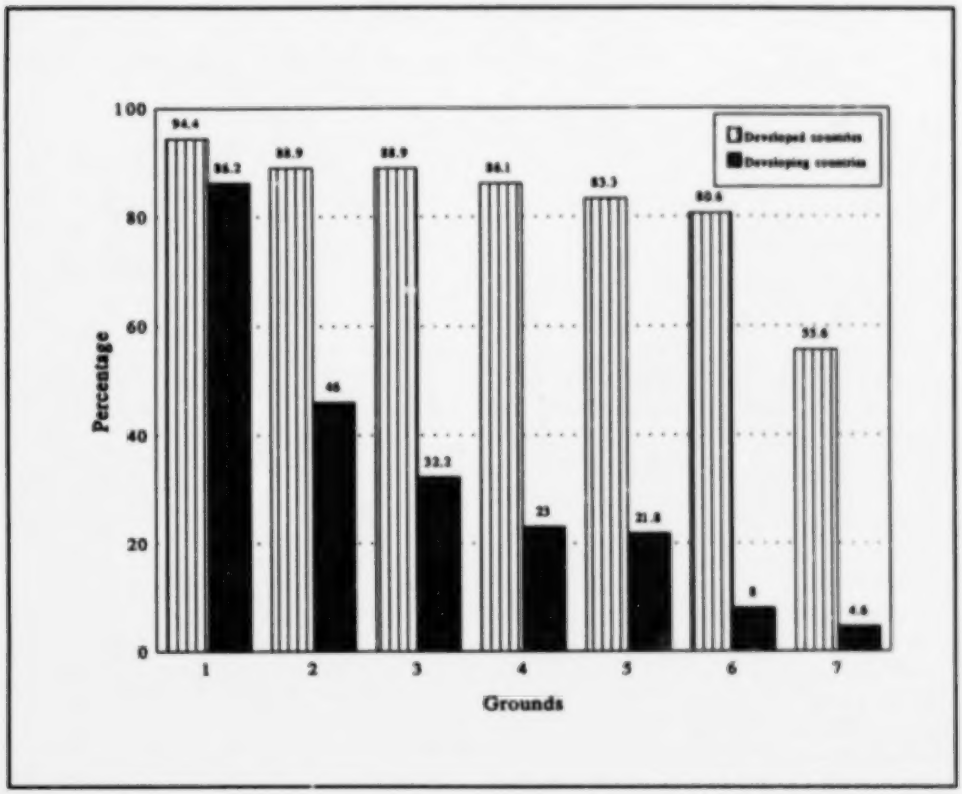


Notes:

1 To save the life of the woman
2 To preserve physical health
3 To preserve mental health
4 Rape on incest
5 Foetal impairment
6 Economic and social reasons
7 Available on request

Source: Abortion Policies: A Global Review, vol. I, *Afghanistan to France* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XIII.3); vol. II, *Gabon to Norway* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XIII.2).

FIGURE III. GROUNDS ON WHICH ABORTION IS PERMITTED, BY LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, AFGHANISTAN TO NORWAY (PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRIES)



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Source: Abortion Policies: A Global Review, vol. I, Afghanistan to France (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.XIII.3); *Abortion Policies: A Global Review, vol. II, Gabon to Norway* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XIII.2).

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In order to assist researchers and policy makers and in view of the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the Population Division is preparing a report on how Governments' view on the relationships between population and the environment in the context of development. Although the interrelationships work both ways, the focus of the report is on perceptions of the impact of population size, growth and spatial distribution on the characteristics of the physical environment.

The Governments' views are being compiled from their reports to and statements at the global and regional conferences on population and/or the environment and on such international policy instruments as the World Population Plan of Action (1974) and Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The views are then analysed from the standpoint of international and national strategies and action plans adopted with respect to specific environmental issues (e.g., desertification, freshwater resources, atmospheric pollution). This allows an assessment of the consistency of international policy instruments and governmental views on concrete mechanisms by which population affects the environment.

CONTRACEPTIVE USE

A global report on trends in the level of contraceptive use and the methods used is being prepared by the Population Division. The report, which updates an earlier review on the topic,[1] is scheduled for publication in the first half of 1994. In addition to providing a comprehensive review of the most recent available data about current contraceptive use, the study will present updated estimates of:

- Global and regional levels of contraceptive prevalence, by method;
- The level of use and number of contraceptive users needed to bring about projected fertility declines between 1990 and 2025;
- The availability of contraceptives to national populations.

The report will also feature two new topics:

- Contraceptive use for all women of reproductive age and a comparison of married and unmarried women's contraceptive practice;
- Contraceptive use as reported by men, and a comparison of men's and women's reports.

A chart showing the latest contraceptive prevalence data will be included in the new report.

WORLD POPULATION MONITORING

Work is under way on the 1993 report on the monitoring of population trends and policies. The report will continue the series that has been issued biennially since 1977. The basic core subjects that have been covered in previous reports will be included in the 1993 report -- namely, population growth; mortality; fertility; international migration; internal migration and urbanization, and population and development. Trends and policies will be considered together in a single volume.

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[1] *Levels and Trends of Contraceptive Use as Assessed in 1988* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIII.4).

Intensive coverage in the 1993 report will be given to refugees. A discussion of refugee trends and national policies towards them is divided into major geographical regions, with a separate section on countries of permanent resettlement. The Population Division expects the report to be published late in 1994.

MEGA-CITIES

The series of monographs entitled *Population Growth and Policies in Mega-Cities* is continuing. The series was launched in January 1986 with the publication of the Calcutta monograph. To date, 13 case-studies have been published in the series, covering Bangkok, Bombay, Cairo, Calcutta, Delhi, Dhaka, Jakarta, Karachi, Madras, Metro Manila, Mexico City, Seoul and Sao Paulo.

The object of the series is to examine the local and national policies that have been formulated and implemented to improve the standard of living and the quality of life of the inhabitants of the world's largest cities. The case-studies provide a demographic synopsis of the cities and examine issues such as population distribution strategies, the provision of cost-effective urban infrastructures (e.g., housing, water, sewerage, transportation, health and educational facilities), the monitoring and creation of employment, the assembly of urban land for development projects, the improvement of municipal revenue-raising mechanisms and the establishment of effective institutional arrangements for planning and managing urban growth. Over time, the case-studies have given increasing emphasis to urban environmental issues.

Case-studies of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires are currently in progress. Future plans involve inclusion of a number of mega-cities in Africa (Lagos and Nairobi) and China (Beijing and Shanghai). Mega-cities from more developed regions which exemplify creative responses to urban environmental issues may also be studied.

MEETINGS IN 1994

January

6-8 January, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), **Second Advisory Group Meeting for the ECE/PAU's Dynamics of Population Ageing Project**, Geneva.

26-28 January, **Meeting of Eminent Persons in Population and Development,** Tokyo, Japan.

February

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), **Meeting of NGOs on the Implementation of Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development,** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

March

16 March-3 December, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), **Fourth Post-graduate Course on Population and Development, 1994,** sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund, Santiago, Chile.

28-31 March, **Population Commission, twenty-seventh session,** United Nations Headquarters, New York.

ECLAC/CELADE, **Special Session on the Regional Population and Development Programme of the Conference of High-level Government Experts (CEGAN),** Santiago, Chile.

ECA, **Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Demographers and Information Scientists**, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

April

4-22 April, **Third session of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994,** United Nations Headquarters, New York.

ECA, **Workshop of Experts on the Implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development,** Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

ECE, **Forum of Researches and Policy Makers in International Migration in Europe,** Geneva.

August

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), **Workshop on Population Information in the Pacific,** Suva.

September

5-13 September, **International Conference on Population and Development,** Cairo, Egypt.

October

ECA, **Workshop on Population Ageing: Country Reports, Women's Issues and Comparative Studies,** Valletta, Malta.

United Nations publications may be obtained from bookstores and distributors throughout the world. Consult your bookstore or write to: United Nations, Sales Section, New York or Geneva.

Requests can also be made to any of the five regional commissions:

ECA: P. O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ECE: Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

ECLAC: Edificio Naciones Unidas
Avenida Dag Hammarskjold Casilla 179-D
Santiago, Chile

ESCAP: United Nations Building
Rajdamnern Avenue
Bangkok, Thailand

ESCWA: P. O. Box 927115
Amman, Jordan

or write to the *Director, Population Division, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA), United Nations, New York, NY 10017*

MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, 1990

Major area or region	*Sex ratio of population (males per 100 females)*		*Children under age 15 (percentage)*	
	Urban areas	*Rural areas*	*Urban areas*	*Rural areas*
World	**100**	**102**	**28**	**36**
More developed regions	**93**	**97**	**20**	**24**
Less developed regions	**105**	**103**	**33**	**37**
Africa	**104**	**97**	**41**	**47**
Eastern Africa	105	97	42	48
Middle Africa	104	94	46	46
Northern Africa	103	101	39	44
Southern Africa	103	95	32	46
Western Africa	105	96	44	48
Asia	**108**	**104**	**29**	**35**
Eastern Asia	105	105	22	29
South-eastern Asia	99	99	33	38
Southern Asia	114	104	36	39
Western Asia	113	98	38	45
Europe	**93**	**100**	**19**	**22**
Eastern Europe	94	98	23	25
Northern Europe	94	102	19	21
Southern Europe	94	100	19	20
Western Europe	93	100	17	21
Latin America	**96**	**108**	**33**	**41**
Caribbean	94	108	28	36
Central America	96	107	37	44
South America	96	109	33	41
Northern America	**93**	**102**	**21**	**24**
Oceania	**99**	**106**	**23**	**35**
Australia/New Zealand	97	111	21	26
USSR (former)*	**89**	**91**	**24**	**29**

Source: "Urban and rural areas by sex and age: *the 1992 Revision*" (ESA/P/WP.120).

(*) Including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are included in Northern Europe.